

Things to Come

#18 The Lamb and the 144,000

(Rev. 14:1-13)

I. Introduction

The narration continues through the three chapter "pause" (Rev. 12, 13, 14). This chapter focuses on Christ and His ultimate triumph over Satan. It answers a couple of questions: A) What happens to those saints who refuse the mark of the beast? B) What happens then to the beast and his servants?

II. The 144,000 on Mount Zion (13:1-5)

A. Who are they?

1. Some commentators believe they are a second group of Jewish believers who survive the tribulation. I believe they are the same group that is described in chapter 7.
2. God is protecting a remnant—as He always has. (Consider Noah, Rahab, and Lot). See Mal. 3:16-17
3. They are not the only ones who are redeemed during the Tribulation. Both Jews and Gentiles will be saved during the Tribulation. Many of them will be martyred. See Zech. 12:10-14, 13:1, 9; Matt. 25:31-46.
4. These 144,000 will come from the 12 tribes of Israel and will survive the Tribulation. They will stand with Christ on Mount Zion.

B. Where are they? Mount Zion

1. It could be located in heaven, but the context does not support that. Some believe this city "comes down from heaven" as if it were the new Jerusalem. However, these men will move into the millennium without dying. I believe this Zion is on earth.
2. In the OT, Zion was the name of the true city of God. It portrays God's "protective presence" with his people.

C. Who are they standing with? The Lamb

In the book of Revelation, we see the Lamb slain (5:6, 13:8), glorified (5:8, 12-13), exalted (7:9-10), as redeemer (7:14), as shepherd (7:17), as Lord of Lords and King of Kings (17:14).

Consider Psalm 2:6-9 "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." I will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the

earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron^{la}; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

D. The name of the Father is written on their foreheads

It is a sign of protection.

A word about eternal security

John 6:37 "All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

John 10:28-29 "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."

Phil. 1:6 "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Jude 24 "To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—"

I Pet. 1:5 "who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

E. The song (vs. 2-3)

It is a song of redemption, sung before the throne. See Ps.33:1-3, 40:3, 96:1-2. The term "learn" may mean to "hear deeply."

F. Characteristics of the group (vs. 4-5)

1. They will "not defile themselves with women." It may mean that these men were literally celibate, but more likely it means that they remained faithful to Christ. See II Cor. 11:2-3
2. They are the "first fruits." This term may mean an initial ingathering of a crop (See Ex. 23:19) or it may designate a kind of pledge or down payment. (See Rom. 8:23)
3. They were "blameless." This does not mean that they are without sin. (Rom. 3:23) They are simply above reproach, called to a life of holiness. See Eph. 1:4.

III. The messages delivered by the angels (vs. 6-10)

Note: these angels appear in logical sequence, it may not be completely chronological.

A. The first angel –"preaches the gospel" (vs. 6-7)

"Flying in midheaven"-high point at noon, very visible for all to see.

"Fear God"- See Ps. 111:10, Prov. 23:17, 24:21, I Pet. 2:17

"Give Him glory"-See Rom. 1:21

B. The second angel-"pronounces judgment" (vs. 8)

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the great"-May refer to a restored city of that name, but most likely refers to the Antichrist's worldwide empire.

C. The third angel-"promises damnation" (vs. 9-11)

"drink the wine of the wrath of God"- See Job 21:20, Ps. 75:8

"fire and brimstone"- used to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-25)

"smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever"-hell is eternal. The fire is unquenchable (Mark 9:43,48)

IV. Those who die in the Lord (vs. 12-13)

"John heard a voice"- this is the 6th time in Revelation that John has heard a voice, it happens three more times.

"blessed"-spiritual joy, satisfaction (See Ps. 1:1-2, 2:12, 32:1-2, 41:1, 84:5, 106:3, 112:1)

"rest from their labors"- the martyrs get to rest from their "exhausting toil"

"their deeds follow with them"-There are rewards for believers in heaven. See Randy Alcorn's book, The Treasure Principle.

V. So What?

This section begins with the Lamb and ends with a description of God's fury. Both His grace and His sense of justice are a part of reckoning with the Lord. We dare not emphasize one above the other. "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God" who sent His very son to die in our place!